

Project Summary

Provide a summary (one-page maximum) that describes key elements of the project and states the total project cost.

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This project proposes to create a geographic information system (GIS) and model of the Sierra Valley sub-watershed. We will utilize available resource maps of the Sierra Valley sub-watershed of the Upper Feather River to aid Sierra and Plumas County and the City of Loyalton in land-use planning. Ensuring decisions which impact the Feather River Watershed by local jurisdictions are informed by sound environmental analysis will promote the State's goals of improving water quality and securing water storage for a dependable source of water for hydropower, drinking, irrigation and eco-system services; and control flooding while improving the local economy, protecting working landscapes, physical, cultural, historical and living resources, and enhancing public use and enjoyment of public lands.

The proposed project will address all of the Conservancy goals. The assessment will act as the foundation for a multitude of projects supporting Conservancy goals. It will generate information about the link between groundwater, surface water and biological resources; infrastructure and capital improvement needs and provide a basis for evaluating the economic benefit to the State of upper watershed conservation and protection. The valley has an unknown capacity to store water through its aquifer and vast wetlands. Maximizing this potential can avert flooding and ameliorate drought effects as well as secure resources for hydropower and carbon sequestration. Significant opportunities for tourism and recreation exist. The Valley is a site rich in Native American and Euro-American history, a world renowned birding location and a hot springs resort. The project will provide environmental data facilitating satisfaction of CEQA requirements by specific projects such as constructing a facility capable of hosting cultural and sporting events; as well as, archiving and displaying cultural resources and providing educational opportunities; and expanding walking and bike trails in connection with a guest-house circuit. Working landscapes are the backbone of the functioning ecosystem found in the Valley. The project will document and assess the relationship between working landscapes and state water goals; potentially broadening the role of conservation easements and eco-system markets .

Local jurisdictions must weigh an overwhelming amount of multifaceted, interrelated watershed-wide data to make and implement sound policy decisions within the Sierra Valley. This project will equip local land-use decision-makers with a tool capable of predictive modeling of complex interacting systems.

Estimated request will be for \$29,000 from the Conservancy with \$20,000 from private funding sources and \$8,000 in in-kind support.